

USDA Farm to School Team Monthly Report December 2010

Site Visits:

The Team has been drafting individual summaries for each of the 15 site visits which will be shared on the USDA Farm to School Website. The summaries communicate the highlights and broad overview of the Team's visit to each school district. On December 9, 2010, and December 13, 2010, narratives for Independence Community School District and Burlington School District were posted to the USDA Farm to School Website, respectively (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/f2stacticalteam.htm>). The remaining summaries will be posted to the Website in the coming months.

A full summary report, which is currently begin compiled, will include the overall common threads of lessons learned, best practices, tips, common barriers, and possible solutions from the Team's 15 site visits. The 15 school districts, which were visited in the 2010 fiscal year, represented nine areas across of varied demographics and Farm to School characteristics. The Team will offer recommendations to the Department based on the site visits, as well as develop and/or reissue appropriate resource materials, guidance, and technical assistance for both schools and farmers based on their site visits. The full summary report is expected to be communicated through the USDA Farm to School website in Spring of 2011.

Policy Development/Technical Assistance:

- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency is developing the final rule on *Geographic Preference Option for Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs*, which is scheduled to enter Department clearance later this year.
- Team members are editing additional Farm to School webpages that will focus on the operation and support of farm to school activities. The webpages will include information on working with farmers and schools, distribution models, impacts of farm to school, food safety, marketing materials for schools, farmers, and community members, supporting activities (e.g., school gardens), and a full summary of observations from the USDA Farm to School Team's site visits. Information on local procurement, USDA grant opportunities, school and community resources, and individual narratives from the Team's 2010 site visits are currently available on the USDA Farm to School Website.
- On December 9, 2010, the October 7, 2010 webinar entitled "Digging through the Farm to School Resources" and questions resulting from the webinar were posted to the USDA Farm to School Website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/sightssoundsstories.htm>.
- On December 6, 9, and 17, 2010, emails via the USDA Farm to School listserv were sent to inform listserv recipients of Website updates.
- On December 13, 2010, the Farm to School Team provided comments to ERS regarding the testing of ERS's Farm to School Census Survey.
- On December 17, 2010, information about the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grants was posted to the USDA Farm to School's "Available USDA Grants" webpage. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/Supporting.htm>.
- Continuously respond to inquiries submitted through the Farm to School email address.

Meetings/Conferences/Presentations:

- On December 7, 2010, a member of the USDA Farm to School Team presented at the USDA Food Commodity Contracting: Opportunities for Rural America meeting in Gettysburg, PA regarding Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food and Farm to School initiatives.
- Members of the Farm to School Team continue to meet regularly with the National Farm to School Network, School Food FOCUS, and other Farm to School stakeholders to discuss future collaborations on Farm to School activities.
- Regular meetings/conference calls are scheduled with core and resource team members.

Upcoming Events (Second Quarter FY2011):

1. Continue release of individual narratives of the Farm to School Team's 2010 site visits via the USDA Farm to School website.
2. Release a summary of the Team's 15 site visits to include the overall common threads of lessons learned, best practices, tips, common barriers, and possible solutions. The summary will be communicated through the USDA Farm to School Website.